

Trek To The Lost City



Duration: 10 days

The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta mountains, declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1979, run through Colombia and end close to the Caribbean Sea on the north coast. They are cloaked in dense tropical rainforest, which hides the ruins of Teyuna, dating back some 1500 years, and more famously known as the Lost City.

As the world gets smaller it becomes harder to visit places before they become a tourism hotspot, but our Lost City trek gives us the opportunity to do just that. To reach the 1200 ancient stone steps that lead up to the city, we trek on steep, sometimes overgrown and muddy trails, through lush jungle and river valleys, crossing clear streams. En route we pass indigenous Kogui communities, descendants of those early builders; we sleep near these settlements in hammocks.

After time to explore the uncrowded ruins and marvel at what would have been here in years gone by, we return and head to colonial Cartagena, with a stunning Caribbean backdrop, this is a tough trek full of natural beauty and cultural discovery, and is guaranteed to be a trip of a lifetime!

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Depart London for Bogota

Day 2: Bogota – Santa Marta

On arrival in Bogota we connect onto Santa Marta, on the northern coast, where we start our trip with a city tour and some lunch before transferring to our hotel. After freshening up, there should be time to relax and explore the old streets or wander by the bay. Santa Marta was founded by conquistadores, and is Colombia's oldest surviving city; there is plenty to see. Later we meet for dinner and a trip briefing. Night hotel.

Day 3: Santa Marta – Casa Adan Camp

Our journey starts with an early morning jeep ride from Santa Marta on roads and then dirt tracks to the small village of El Mamey; here we have lunch while our local support team sorts the kit, and we set off! The route eases us in fairly gently, with an early chance to cool off at a swimming hole; it's hot with little shade before we enter the jungle proper. Then there's a steep climb up through rainforest, which in the heat and humidity feels much further than it actually is, before descending into a lush valley. Night camp.

Drive approx 2 hours; Trek approx 4-5 hours

Day 4: Casa Adan Camp – Paraiso Teyuna Camp

After an early breakfast, we trek steadily uphill through the heart of the jungle – it's beautiful, but tough terrain and we take it slow. Spotting wildlife in dense jungle can be tricky, but the air around us is thick with birdsong and the hum of insects; the diversity in these forests is impressive. You may see toucans, parakeets and hummingbirds, and some of the many species of tiny frogs. Larger mammals include tapirs, otters and jaguars, though they are very elusive and you would be very lucky to spot them! After regular stops for fresh fruit, we reach the top of our ascent and are rewarded with a long downhill walk through some beautiful landscapes and Kogui villages of round, thatched huts and farmed pockets of land. This is a really tough day but once we reach camp we can enjoy a swim in the crystalline river. Night camp.

Trek approx 9-11 hours

Day 5: Paraiso Teyuna Camp – Lost City – Wiwa Camp

An exciting day ahead, and we rise early to ensure we have plenty of time to explore the Lost City. The jungle path leads us alongside the river for a stretch, and we cross over to reach the ancient flight of stone steps rising through the dense vegetation to the ruins – count them to see if there truly are 1200! This is a sacred city, held in high respect by the local people, and we enjoy a tour to appreciate its history and significance. There is also sometimes an opportunity to hear some of the sacred stories from el Mamo, the local spiritual leader. After soaking up the views and unique atmosphere that surrounds these incredible ruins, it's time to return back along the trail via last night's camp, and further on to Wiwa. This is a long, tough day, but a real highlight. Night camp.

Trek approx 10-12 hours (incl 3 hours at Lost City)

Day 6: Wiwa Camp – El Mamey – Santa Marta

Our final day in the jungle sees us returning back to the trailhead at El Mamey, stopping en-route at a waterfall where we can cool off. We meet the 4 x 4 vehicles and drive back to the road, and on to Santa Marta, where a well-earned bed and shower await! There should be some time free to enjoy wandering the sights of Santa Marta. Night hotel.

Trek approx 5.5-7 hours; drive approx 2 hours

(Dinner not included)

Day 7: Santa Marta – Tayrona National Park – Santa Marta

A hike with a difference today, as we explore beautiful Tayrona National Park, where the rainforest meets the Caribbean. It's stunning, with huge granite boulders and small coves protected by the coral reefs. We explore the old trails at a relaxed pace, before enjoying a swim in the natural swimming-holes. This coastal beauty contrasts hugely with the more arduous rainforest habitat we have been immersed in. We return to Santa Marta. Night hotel.

Trek approx 4 hours

(Dinner not included)

Day 8: Santa Marta – Cartagena

After breakfast we transfer to the colonial city of Cartagena (lunch stop en-route); it was an important town and port for the Spanish colonies, and the walled city and San Felipe fortress have UNESCO World Heritage Site status. After a city tour of the main historical sites, including the fortress which dominates the city, we have plenty of time to relax, wander and shop the markets to our hearts' contents. Farewell dinner in local restaurant. Night hotel.

Drive approx 5 hours (incl stop for lunch)

(Lunch not included)

Day 9: Cartagena; Flight departs

Free time to enjoy discovering more of the charm of Cartagena, before transferring to the airport for our flight home

(Lunch and Dinner not included)

Day 10: Arrive UK

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All transport from London to Santa Marta / Cartagena return
- Internal flight departure taxes
- All meals except where specified, accommodation and camping equipment
- Discover Adventure leaders; doctor with group of 15 or more participants; local guides, porters and cooks
- Local support and back-up equipment
- Entrance to Lost City ruins and other sites visited as part of the itinerary

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Any meals specified 'not included' in itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Personal spending money, souvenirs and drinks
- Tips for the local guides and support crew
- International airport departure tax
- Sleeping bag
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Airline taxes: we cap these so £250.00 is the maximum you will pay
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | ORANGE

Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **ORANGE** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors; trip duration, accommodation and living conditions (see icon) are also taken into account.

[Trip grading explained](#)

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader. Usually leaders are based in the UK or other English-speaking countries and lead for us regularly throughout the year in many different countries. In some instances, trips are led by in-country guides with a wealth of knowledge about the region; they have been trained by us to provide the level of support expected on a Discover Adventure trip.

Trip Doctor

An expedition doctor or medic accompanies the group (dependent on group size.) Their role is to look after the well-being of the whole group and deal with any medical incidents. They help the crew to ensure the trip runs smoothly, and

encourage you when things get tough. The total number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your group.

Local Support Crew

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, assisted by drivers, porters, cooks and other support staff, depending on the type of trip. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. Not all support crew will speak English well, but are very friendly and approachable. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek, and you will be provided with a guideline amount in advance. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will be happy to donate something! All our local crew are paid wages, but bear in mind that the average wage in many countries may be less than you would spend on an average night out.

Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with communication devices (eg phones, radios and/or emergency satellite phones), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Flight Information

Group flights usually leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick on scheduled airlines and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your journey may involve a transit en route; details of route and flight times will be confirmed several months before departure. We do not always use the same airline for each destination; if you wish to know the probable carrier and flight times, please call for details. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline. If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost.

Accommodation

We sleep overnight in super campsites with good facilities given the remote locations. Camps have communal dining

areas, sit-on flush toilets and showers, and are even powered by generator for a couple of hours each evening! We sleep in dorms with rows of bunks equipped with a thick mattress and a mosquito net, which makes it feel less of a communal living experience than it really is! The local crew look after us very well and the food is excellent. We stay in good hotels (of a 3-4* standard or equivalent) at the start and end of the trip; standards may vary between different hotels, but they are generally clean and comfortable with good facilities.

Roomshare Arrangements

Some accommodation will be twin-share. Please tell us if you know somebody else on the trip that you would like to share with and we will try our best to accommodate your request. If you don't know anyone else in the group don't worry, we always pair you up with someone of the same gender, and a similar age where possible. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

On some nights we are likely to sleep in more communal accommodation such as dormitories/hostels, huts, local homestays or monasteries, depending on the trip, and you may be sharing with a larger number of participants or the whole group; this type of accommodation cannot always be single-sex.

Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge. Our typical groups run with approximately 15-25 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.

Food & Dietary Requirements

The food provided is plentiful, often local in style and freshly-cooked, and will give you plenty of energy. Sometimes we enjoy a buffet-style lunch-stop, other times we might have packed lunches. On some trips we stop at small local restaurants. Dinners are generally eaten at our accommodation each evening. In some regions there may be less variety than you are used to, and in others fresh meat or produce can be harder to come by. Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally on travel / free days, giving you the opportunity to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit different budgets.

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Please do not expect as much variety as you would have access to at home – we may be in very rural or remote areas, or among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat we strongly recommend you bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Luggage

Your luggage, food, water and equipment is transported for you from one night-stop to the next. If there is easy road access this is done by vehicle; if not porters, mules or even camels might carry your bags, depending on the terrain.

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft bag, rucksack or expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already. You should also bring a small daypack to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the [FCO's advice](#) on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. Please ensure you allow plenty of time to apply for your visa; we will provide you with all necessary information 6 weeks prior to departure to assist with your application.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check [Fit For Travel](#) for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, with plenty of

information, and we are always available if you need advice.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on all of our challenges outside of the UK; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed, or as soon as you're able to purchase some, and at least 8 months prior to travel. Should you need to cancel prior to departure, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

We all hope never to need it, and thankfully most of the time we don't, but on those rare occasions when you do, you want it to cover you as best it can. Whilst it's a fairly boring admin task relating to your trip of a lifetime, it is really important you ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation, so make sure you're happy with the level of cover. There are lots of suppliers out there, with a wide range in levels of cover; generally speaking, you get what you pay for! Get and pay for the right level of cover and then you can go on your adventure not having to worry about the what-if's. For more details click [here](#).

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24-hr medical emergency phone number provided by your insurers.

Cultural Differences

For most people, the main attraction of travelling to a different country is to see new sights and enjoy new experiences. Sometimes those new experiences can make life harder or more inconvenient than you may like, such as toilet hygiene or different food, or simply a different attitude to solving problems. This is all part of the challenge you are signing up for! We are very privileged to live in a country with a high standard of living, and travelling exposes us to different challenges – all of which help broaden our horizons. We can guarantee that coming face-to-face with experiences outside your normal 'comfort zone' will help you bond with your fellow participants and provide you with plenty of things to laugh about! A sense of humour and sense of adventure are two of the most important things to bring with you!

Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by post or email. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration fees and amendment fees are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - [Passenger Portal Log in](#).



Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 19 May 2024, and the challenge is subject to change.